

THE INTERFACE BETWEEN ARMY RESERVIST
CHAPLAINS AND ACTIVE DUTY ARMY CHAPLAINS:

Focus on Annual Training Relationships

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Introduction	1
I. Factors which affect the Reservist chaplain	2
1. Self-perception as a minister	2
2. Training in USAR	3
3. Experience on extended active duty	3
4. Attitude toward authority	4
5. Commander's opinion	6
II. Situations of Interface between Reservist Chaplains and Active Duty Chaplains during Annual Training	9
1. Desire for respite	9
2. Desire for doing more than expected	9
3. Ability to blend into active duty	10
4. Learning from active duty chaplains	10
5. Learning from Reservist chaplains	11
III. Two further suggestions for improvement	13
1. More contact between Reservist and active duty chaplains	13
2. The chaplain coordinator as a "bridge"	14

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DUTY CHAPLAINS: Focus on Annual Training Relationships

Introduction.

The military chaplain has traditionally advised the army commander in the area of the commander's responsibility " . . . for the religious life, morals, and morale as affected by religion."¹ The chaplain also assists the commander " . . . to implement policies and leadership practices that are in keeping with moral and ethical, and humanitarian standards. . . ."²

An important recent study³ of the motivation of the volunteer soldier concluded that group opinion in a unit may be less important than internal values in the future in combat performance. COL Charles W. Brown and Professor Charles C. Moskos, Jr. examined the following major influences on combat behavior: military environment, discipline, leadership, training, combat situation, societal influence, and group relationships. They stated that these factors affect a person's inner value system, which includes the soldier's perception of the factors and his understanding of his role as a soldier.⁴ The authors asserted that their surveys and interviews indicated that the volunteer soldier will more likely depend on an internalized value system rather than on group pressure in combat action.⁵

The internalized value system may be enhanced through the use of army chaplains. Indeed the newest edition of THE CHAPLAIN (FM 16-5) has an entire section on "Pastoral Care and Counseling."⁶ In this area the chaplain should

" . . . concentrate upon the total well being of the individual as a person, on families, and on command as an institution "7 Section IV of FM 16-5 asserts further that the Chaplain Support Activities Program should deal with all persons as of "inherent dignity". Thus the CSA program, " . . . as a logical extension of the chaplain's prophetic ministry . . . , " ought to bring the chaplain to discuss " . . . social, moral, and ethical issues with the commander."8

To effect such claims will require close coordination between active duty chaplains and Reservist chaplains. This article will discuss some factors which affect Reservist chaplains as they work, some situations of interface between active duty chaplains and Reservist chaplains on Annual Training, and some suggestions for improvement. Although the latter section will be very brief, other suggestions for improvement emerge throughout this discussion.

I. Factors which affect the Reservist chaplain.

The Reservist chaplain arrives in his uniform with several factors that affect his actions.

1. His perception of his role as a minister in civilian life. For example, he may be a fulltime pastor, priest, rabbi, religious counselor or hospital chaplain. That vocation may tie him very closely to his own religious group's opinions. However, he may instead work as a fulltime college instructor or in some other occupation. That person's perception of his role as minister in civilian life may differ greatly from the

self-perception of the fulltime pastor or church worker. He may consider himself as "brother" to other persons, rather than as "spiritual father" to them, perhaps as a pastor would. As a result, he may be less emphatic about impressing his own religious beliefs upon other Army personnel.

2. His training in Army Reserve courses, reading, or in US Army Chaplains School Career Course. His expectations will be shaped somewhat by the opinions advanced by chaplain instructors who led him through particular courses. His Chaplain School training may be affected by the Course Director, Course writers, and very much by the perception of the Army Chief of Chaplains in control during the chaplain's formative years. The newer chaplain may not, of course, accept everything from the Chaplain School as authoritative or perhaps even normative; yet he cannot avoid responding or reacting to "prevailing winds" as he develops his own chaplain ministry.

3. His experience on extended active duty, apart from his Chaplain School education. That experience may range from zero to several years as a chaplain, or even as an officer in a different branch(as one Episcopal chaplain I know), or to some years as an enlisted man or NCO. The satisfaction or fulfillment which he experienced on active duty may affect his perception of how to serve as a chaplain in relation to enlisted personnel, NCO's, officers, and other chaplains. Such experience may affect his relationship to the Reserve commander especially, and certainly to his staff supervisor, whether the executive officer or another chaplain. Unsatisfactory exper-

iences with active duty officers may carry over into the chaplain's responses and reactions to Reservist officers.⁹

For example, the chaplain who has been denigrated by an active duty commander may be wary of any close association to a Reservist commander or his other staff officers.

Or, the decelerated pace of the Reservist chaplain ministry may irritate him because he desires "to do something as a chaplain" besides attend scheduled assemblies and only intermittently to be faced with a "presented religious need."

Yet very satisfactory experiences on active duty may encourage the chaplain to serve vigorously in his Reserve unit.

4. His attitude toward authority, organizational structure, chain of command(or channels of action), and "bureaucracy". Here several factors will influence his attitude. Among the factors are his conception of God or religion, his maturity in relating to authority figures, and even his understanding of himself as "prophet," "priest," "counselor," or "minister". (Here also the self-concept as "spiritual brother" or "spiritual father" will affect his interaction with authority. His denomination's approach, ranging from local autonomy of a congregation to intense outside control by creed or ecclesiastical structure, will also influence how he relates to command.)

One of my personal disappointments is the lack of emphasis on a "prophetic" ministry as a chaplain. Several other valid ministry roles seem more acceptable to Army Reserve or active

duty chaplaincy, but the "critical" function of "the chaplain as prophet" seems downgraded or rejected by the "system" or by "command" generally.¹⁰

In August, 1977, I completed my early morning readings from Robert McAfee Brown's The Pseudonyms of God. I had anticipated the book would deal with pseudo-religion or with some unusual ways God may have used to reveal himself to persons. That could have been an esoteric book, leading me to consider theoretical positions or hypothetical situations that could hardly touch my life at any particular point of practical experience. However, after Dr. Brown had laid down a doctrinal and historical framework, he then moved Vietnam and himself "into the frame". I began to ask myself:

(1) "Why had I considered him and others like him as outlandish and impractical liberals?"

(2) "How did I continue in the Army Reserve, even counseling with former students on their way through Fort Lewis, Washington on to the conflict in Vietnam, without much pain about the buildup of forces there?"

As I considered my pangs of conscience, I realized that I had never questioned whether to remain in the Army Reserve as a chaplain. Instead my pain centered on my inaction as "a moral or ethical prophet" within the Army Reserve.

Is it indeed true that Army chaplains and Reservist chaplains may serve as priests or in other roles, but hardly as prophets to the command and the persons within the unit? Outside the military meetings and uniforms, we may voice our moral convictions about limitations on war and the pur-

suit of peace and justice. Within the military framework, are we limited to a priesthood, even a perfunctory one?¹¹ Norene R. Evans, in her "Reflections from the Army Pew " expresses her need for a chaplain to apply the Bible to real people, such as her as "Mrs. Army Wife." She emphatically says:

Personally I need a chaplain to speak about the fact that the husband whom I love, my children's father, whom they can hopefully love and admire, is trained to kill. Just because we serve in the defense of our country, is it a sacrilege to talk about men being trained for combat to kill or be killed? My insides lurch when I consider this and I'd like¹² to hear God's word on the subject.

Perhaps I, and some other chaplains, have fallen into a trap of paid professionals, busy about self-advancement and career-development. Perhaps I've been anxious not "to rock any boat", publicly or privately at all. Perhaps we chaplains could indeed speak as specialists in religion and ethics to military professionals about humane consideration of our own military personnel and about restrictions on our potential acts of war and within wars.

5. Another important factor is the commander's opinion. The commander and his other staff officers, especially the executive officer (the usual staff supervisor of the chaplains in a brigade), may have expectations which differ from the chaplain's concept of his ministry. That opinion may be either distorted or stereotyped, but it need not be. The two opinions may merely be different.

Chaplain (ITC) Billy W. Libby reviewed the book entitled THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN, by Clarence L. Abernethy in a recent

issue of MILITARY CHAPLAINS REVIEW.¹³ Abercrombie surveyed Army chaplains, civilian clergy, and Army commanders. He then listed their responses to eleven task options for chaplains. In brief, Abercrombie was surprised at the similarity of clergy and chaplain responses and at the disparity between commander and chaplain responses on several items.¹⁴

On the other hand, COL Quay C. Snyder has written a recent article of positive expectations of the chaplain " . . . as a confidant to all the soldiers in the unit." In his "mythical letter" to a chaplain arriving in his unit, COL Snyder continues, among other advice,¹⁵ to state:

In short I expect you to be another set of eyes and ears without undermining the special relationship or confidence you ~~must~~ have with each of our soldiers.

When a commander expects one type of chaplain ministry to be visible in his unit and then discovers that "his" chaplain expects, and attempts, to carry out a different type of ministry, the commander may not be pleased. That commander may denigrate or criticize negatively the chaplain who does not fulfill the commander's role expectations. Certainly the commander, and other staff officers, may understand the needs of the unit personnel better than a chaplain, especially when a "new" chaplain arrives in a unit or when a chaplain does not have much access to the attitudes of the personnel. In such a situation, the commander and the executive officer, and indeed other staff officers or NCO's, need to inform the chaplain of the unmet needs and aid him in learning how to discover the type of ministry most likely to meet such needs.

However, when a variance does occur in the expectations of the commander and the Reservist chaplain, frequently the chaplain must "stand up" to his commander and attempt to define his ministry and to educate his commander as to the varied forms of ministry a chaplain may perform. Together the team of the commander and the chaplain could develop a concept of the workable alternatives of chaplain ministry that would be acceptable to both the commander and the chaplain. Furthermore, the chaplain, with other staff officers may need to explore the parameters of a chaplain ministry they may all be able to accept.

An example of the need for dialogue may occur when a **Reservist** commander had never had more than one chaplain to deal with. When he faces a full complement of three brigade chaplains, for example, he and they must actively seek to understand each other and to engage in continuous dialogue about the operation of a section of three chaplains rather than the activity of one chaplain, or none.

As another example from an active duty chaplain's past experience, we may consider the commander who seems unsympathetic to the expressed needs or demands of his staff, NCOs, and other enlisted personnel. The chaplain may discuss the apparent lack of sympathy or understanding and yet find that the commander is "out of range". That commander may be unwilling to adjust even slightly to the stated needs of his personnel. There is consequently some risk for the chaplain, especially on Officer Efficiency Reports; yet the chaplain is charged with the duty of advising and consulting with the commander and his staff on matters of morale as affected by religion.¹⁶

The chaplain also must " . . . assist the commander to implement policies and leadership practices that are in keeping with moral and ethical, and humanitarian standards by providing periodic evaluation to the commander on the moral and spiritual health of the command."¹⁷ That evaluation must include " . . . command policies, leadership practices and management systems."¹⁸

II. Situations of Interface between Reservist Chaplains and Active Duty Chaplains during Annual Training.

The foregoing factors may affect the "interface" between Army Reservist chaplains and active duty Army chaplains. Some of the situations which may bring the counterparts together during Annual Training are discussed here.

1. Some Reservist chaplains on Annual Training may desire a respite from their civilian routines. Either their congregations or other civilian jobs may be quite demanding, and, as a result, some Reservists may plan to do as little as possible away from the civilian world for two weeks. However the Reservist commander may expect the chaplain to work both with his Reservist personnel and with the active duty chaplain's program.

2. At another extreme, some Reservist chaplains on Annual Training may desire to do more than their active duty counterparts wish them to do. Some active duty chaplains may be themselves "about out" of military service because of pending retirement, or failure to secure a promotion or to pass a physical exam, for examples. Other busy chap-

lains may resent the interruption in their planned, hectic schedules. They may validly object to breaking in a "new" chaplain, every two weeks during the summer, especially when the new chaplain will indeed be gone 11 or so working days after he arrives on the post.

3. Some Reservist chaplains may "blend" into the active ministry of the counterpart chaplains to which they are assigned for two weeks. Both may welcome the interchange of ideas, the fellowship with similarly committed believers, and the opportunity to "share" responsibilities of an ongoing ministry, even though temporarily. Both counterparts could exchange critiques (positive and negative) about their approaches to ministry.

4. Reservist chaplains may learn a great deal from active duty chaplains. Because many chaplains come from the pastorate or the congregation without prior military experience, they especially need, and may even welcome wholeheartedly, to learn more of what an Army ministry can be and how other military personnel may helpfully use the chaplain well.

As an example, unlike a friend who was a tank commander in Europe during World War II, I had to learn about weapons, armored personnel carriers, ATT, AIT, etc., through the years as Annual Training and Inactive Duty Training went on. (Of course, even a chaplain may dislike admitting how "green" he really is; therefore an active duty chaplain could perhaps, inobtrusively and almost painlessly, introduce him to routine Army matters.) As a more recent example, after twenty years as a Reservist, I experienced the ministry of Chaplain(CPT)

Karl Willoughby at Ft. Leonard Wood in the autumn of 1977. Few, if indeed any other, battalion chaplains I have known have been so totally involved in the activities of a battalion:

- (1) night office scheduling for AIT trainees,
- (2) movies in battalion area for tired trainees,
- (3) early Thursday morning devotionals with a motor pool,
- (4) Monday morning company commanders call with the battalion chaplain at their request,
- (5) expected involvement in battalion staff meetings,
- (6) intercommunication between Army personnel and the civilian community,
 - (a) by bringing religious college students to FLW for Saturday Bible study with Army persons and,
 - (b) on the other hand, by taking volunteer Army persons for a WEEKEND AWAY at a nearby church for Sunday morning worship, homecooked dinners in the homes of church families, and fellowship with the families before return to FLW for Monday training and duty, and
- (7) weekly prayer lunches for all NCO's and officers interested in devoting a lunch break to a religious emphasis.

Obviously, this Reservist chaplain has outstanding support from his commander in order to become so involved.

5. The obverse may be true instead. Reservist chaplains may lead active duty chaplains to learn some things

during their brief contacts on Annual Training. The personnel of a Reserve unit may be far more varied in civilian interests, training and education, vocations, and ambitions than those of an active duty Army unit. The Reservist members also are generally far more scattered geographically than those of an active duty Army unit.

The Reservist could bring to the active duty chaplain the "fresh air" of dealing with MUTA-4 persons, ranging from fulltime auto mechanics to PhD's in almost anything, from coal miners to union workers to presidents of successful private businesses, from classroom teachers to marine biologists. Infrequent contact with scattered personnel demands a somewhat different chaplain ministry from one emanating from daily contacts of an active duty chaplain with unit members and families of a concentrated unit.

Certainly other Reservists besides the chaplain are working to unite the battalion, brigade, or other-sized unit; however, the chaplain must learn to be as interested in the agenda of other officers, NCO's and enlisted personnel, as well as in his chaplain agenda. He needs, for instance, to listen to persons far more than to talk at them, to pray for them in different ways as well as to gather them for a "chapel program", a "chapel service", or a "religious instruction hour".

Our Reserve brigade's "Prayer Partners" concept emerged out of the needs of enlisted persons and the pressures on officers and other personnel in attempting to transform a training division into an armored division in perhaps two years of MUTA-4's and AT's. The "Prayer Partners" program attempts

to unite the brigade in praying for each other. Volunteers may confidentially commit themselves to pray at least weekly for the stated and unstated needs of the brigade and the people within it. The needs are solicited as confidential, voluntary requests from anyone in the brigade. Such a ministry of praying persons may prove as helpful to our brigade as any "chaplain as usual" approach.

Active duty chaplains may need to be reminded that the basic religious exercises of scripture reading, prayer, confession, forgiveness, and fellowship of believers may be helpful on both the "human" and "spiritual" levels in the Army. SP4 Edwin F. Irwin, in his article entitled "A Divine Commission?", focusses on the misplacement of priorities that he observed as chaplains have sometimes forgotten that their primary mission is to be religious leaders.¹⁹

The active duty chaplain may need also to be reminded that his unit could very quickly become a dispersed unit with more stated needs for a chaplain and with somewhat similar problems to a dispersed Reservist unit. He could learn perhaps from a Reservist chaplain about communication with a continually dispersed unit.

III. TWO FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

1. One of the needs I perceive is to increase the frequency and amount of contact between Reservist chaplains and active duty chaplains throughout the training year. (I realize the Readiness Region Chaplain attempts such contact.) "Comparing notes" once a year through Annual Training is not

enough to join well the two counterpart groups into a concerted fellowship.

Perhaps active duty chaplains from active duty units could visit periodically with Reservist chaplains at their USAR centers to take part in mutual assistance and learning. Also, whenever possible, Reservist chaplains could be permitted Equivalent Training on an Army post, for very brief tours (such as 2 or 3 days) during the training year. Furthermore, with coordination, Reservist training schools and conferences could use active duty chaplains far more than at present.

2. The Army chaplain coordinator for "Reserve Chaplains" on a particular post could do more than to receive advance notice of arrivals and to point the Reservist chaplain toward a particular building, unit or chaplain to which to attach himself for two weeks. The coordinator could surely be released from some other duties in order to be used more actively as a bridge between the Reservist chaplain and his counterpart active duty chaplain. His role could include bridging the move from civilian life into involvement in the military community, even more actively than it does now. Yet a more extensive entry orientation by the chaplain coordinator would more likely assure that the Reservist would be more helpful at that particular post during his two-week stint.

During the Annual Training period, the coordinator could take the initiative to contact the Reservist chaplain about his involvement and to offer his own time and

other assistance to enhance the active duty training.

Furthermore, the chaplain coordinator could also engage in an exit interview with the counterpart chaplains (active duty and Reservist). They could surely, in a non-threatening way, brief the coordinator about the two-week experience prior to the departure of the Reservist chaplain to civilian life. The result would be more thorough coordination during the two weeks and probably more help from the Reservist chaplain and to him and to the active duty unit.

A final word or two. Army Reservist and active duty Army chaplains could as a team provide more religious benefits to the volunteer soldiers who, according to Brown and Voskos, will rely heavily on "internalized value systems" in combat, whether in war-making or peace-keeping actions.

Endnotes.

¹FM 16-5, Para. 1-2.

²FM 16-5, Para. 1-3.

³COL Charles W. Brown, USA, and Charles C. Moskos, Jr., "The American Volunteer Soldier: Will He Fight? A Pro-
visional Attitudinal Analysis", MILITARY REVIEW, LVI, No. 6
(June, 1976), 8-17.

⁴Brown and Moskos, p. 2f.

⁵Brown and Moskos, p. 16.

⁶Para. 3-16 through Para. 3-18.

⁷Page 3-11.

⁸Para. 3-19.

⁹Harry G. Rosenbluh, "Three Looks at the Chaplaincy",
MILITARY CHAPLAINS REVIEW. DA PAM 165-115. Wash., D. C.:
Department of the Army, Fall, 1977. P. 53. Although he is
admittably subjective in his article, Rosenbluh does emphasize
the genuine dichotomy between enlisted personnel and officers,
including the chaplains.

¹⁰Chaplain(COL) William V. O'Connor, in an interview
considered many human relations activities to emerge from
his prophetic role. "He sees the present need and concedes
to the future, actually guiding the way things ought to go."
P. 8 in "A Look at the Chaplaincy: Yesterday and Today", MILITARY
CHAPLAINS REVIEW. DA PAM 165-105. Wash., D. C.: Department
of the Army, Spring, 1975.

¹¹Certainly I have preached from Nahum on the restraints
that should be placed upon war-making, and also on Lincoln's
pilgrimage toward mercy and peace in a divided nation. Yet
most of my time may have been spent on fitting myself and
others into the military system.

¹²Horene R. Evans, "Reflections from the Army Pew",
MILITARY CHAPLAINS REVIEW. DA PAM 165-15. Wash., D. C.:
Department of the Army, Fall, 1977. P. 67f.

¹³Chaplain Libby's book review of THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN
(Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977) was published in
MILITARY CHAPLAINS REVIEW. DA PAM 165-114. Wash., D. C.:
Department of the Army, Fall, 1977. P. 7.

¹⁴Libby, p. 103. In Abercrombie's book, Table #5.1 appears
on p. 91.

¹⁵COL Quay C. Snyder, "What does the commander expect
from the chaplain?" MILITARY CHAPLAINS REVIEW. DA PAM 165-115.
Wash., D. C.: Department of the Army, Fall, 1977. P. 7.

¹⁶FM 16-5, Para. 1-3.

17. TM 16-5, Para. 1-3.

18. TM 16-5, Para. 1-3.

19. SP4 Edwin P. Irwin, "A Divine Commission?" MILITARY CHAPLAINS REVIEW. DA PAM 165-115. Wash., D. C.: Department of the Army, Fall, 1977. P. 15.

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Inclosure C to Appendix 1 to Advance Sheet. Statement of Authorship

Directions: Print your name, rank, social security number, branch, component, parent USAR school, and current mailing address in the designated spaces. Sign this statement using your payroll signature. Your signature on this statement constitutes certification that the article for publication in a military journal that you are submitting for a grade is your own effort. Papers that show evidence of plagiarism, as defined in paragraph 4h of the advance sheet, will be reported to the Commandant for further investigation and action as deemed necessary.

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